

REMARKS

Claims 1-20 are currently pending in this application. Claims 2, 3, 5, 9-13, 15, 17, 18 and 20 have been amended. More specifically, claims 2, 5, 9, and 20 have been rewritten in independent form to include all the features of the corresponding base claims and any intervening claims. Claims 2, 5, 9, and 20 were further amended to clarify certain features of these claims. Claims 3, 12, 13, 15, 17 and 18 have been amended merely to change the dependencies of these claims, and not for any reasons related to patentability. Claims 1, 8, 14 and 19 have been cancelled without prejudice to pursuing these claims in a continuation, divisional, or other application. New claims 21-24 have been added.

In the Office Action mailed April 10, 2008, pending claims 1-20 were rejected. More specifically, the status of the application in light of this Office Action is as follows:

(A) Claims 1, 2, 5, 8-11, 14 and 17-20 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over the combination of U.S. Patent No. 6,556,711 to Koga et al. ("Koga") and U.S. Pat. No. 4,996,603 to Kanemitsu et al. ("Kanemitsu");

(B) Claims 3, 6, 12, 13 and 15 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over Koga in view of Kanemitsu and further in view of Kanemitsu; and

(C) Claims 4, 7 and 16 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over the combination of Koga, Kanemitsu, and U.S. Pat. No. 5,987,221 to Bearss et al. ("Bearss").

The undersigned attorney and his colleague, Joe Brennan (Reg. No. 62,403), wish to thank Examiner Riley for engaging in a telephone conference on July 14, 2008 to discuss the present Office Action, the applied references (Koga and Kanemitsu), and the pending claims. During the course of the telephone conference, the undersigned attorney and the Examiner discussed some of the distinctions between the pending

claims and the applied references. The applicant requests that this paper constitute the applicant's Interview Summary. If the Examiner notices any deficiencies with this paper in this regard, he is encouraged to contact the undersigned attorney to correct such deficiencies.

A. Response to the Section 103(a) Rejection of Claims 1, 2, 5, 8-11, 14 and 17-20 (Koga and Kanemitsu)

Claims 1, 2, 5, 8-11, 14 and 17-20 were rejected under Section 103(a) as being unpatentable over Koga in view of Kanemitsu. Claims 1, 8, 14, and 19 have been cancelled and, accordingly, the rejection of these claims is now moot. The undersigned attorney wishes to thank the Examiner for providing a detailed explanation of his position regarding these references during the July 14th telephone conference. For at least the reasons explained below, the applied references cannot support a Section 103 rejection of claims 2, 5, 9-11, 17, 18, and 20.

As discussed during the July 14th telephone conference, the applied references fail to disclose or suggest all the claimed features. Independent claim 2, for example, recites "cutting transversely the entirety of said condensed area" in combination with "cutting vertically the entirety of said transversely cut area into several individual areas." According to the Office Action, Koga describes transversely and vertically cutting a condensed area. (Office Action, p. 12.) Applicant respectfully disagrees with this interpretation of Koga.

As discussed during the July 14th telephone conference, Koga actually describes reducing an image by removing selected pixels. (Koga, col. 33, line 66 – col. 34, line 10.) Koga describes that an image can be reduced by half in the vertical and horizontal directions (e.g., an 8 pixel by 8 pixel image is reduced to a 4 pixel by 4 pixel image) by such removal of pixels. (*Id.*) Koga does not describe what is done to the removed pixels, but implies that no processing of the removed pixels is performed. In contrast, claim 2 recites that after the entirety of the condensed area has been transversely and

vertically cut into individual areas, individual areas with images are marked as an image area, and individual areas with characters are marked as a character area. Because Koga does not teach or suggest "cutting transversely the entirety of said condensed area" or "cutting vertically the entirety of said transversely cut area into several individual areas," Koga does not teach or suggest all the features of claim 2. Kanemitsu fails to cure the deficiencies of Koga with respect to claim 2. Accordingly, for at least this reason, claim 2 is patentable over the combination of Koga and Kanemitsu.

Independent claim 5, as amended, includes several features generally similar to those of claim 2 (e.g., "cutting transversely the entirety of the condensed master copy into additional first individual areas" in combination with "cutting vertically the entirety of the master copy into additional first individual areas"). As discussed above with respect to claim 2, Koga fails to teach or suggest these features, and Kanemitsu fails to cure Koga's deficiencies. Claim 5 further recites "if the first individual area does not include either an image portion or a text portion, then ... replacing the first background color with the second background color." According to the Office Action, Koga describes replacing a first background color with a second background color. (Office Action, p. 15.) Applicant respectfully disagrees with this interpretation of Koga.

As discussed during the July 14th telephone conference, Koga actually describes repeating a process for discriminating image segments until there are no longer any undiscriminated image segments. (Koga, col. 14, lines 56-60.) Koga describes a background color extraction step in which the colors of an intermediate image segment are analyzed. (Koga, col. 11, lines 50-55.) However, Koga does not describe performing the replacement of a first background color with a second background color, as recited in claim 5. Koga does not teach or suggest all the features of claim 5. Kanemitsu also fails to cure the deficiencies of Koga with respect to claim 5. Accordingly, for at least the foregoing reasons, claim 5 is patentable under Section 103 over the combination of Koga and Kanemitsu.

Independent claims 9 and 20, as amended, include several features generally similar to those of claim 2. For example, claim 9 recites "cutting transversely the entirety of said condensed area" in combination "cutting vertically the entirety of said transversely cut area into several individual areas," and claim 20 reciting "a component configured to transversely and vertically cut the entirety of the condensed area." As noted above with respect to claim 2, Koga does not teach or suggest these features, and Kanemitsu fails to cure Koga's deficiencies. For at least the foregoing reasons, the Section 103 rejections of claims 9 and 20 should be withdrawn.

Claims 10 and 11 have been amended to depend from base claim 9, and claims 17 and 18 have been amended to depend from base claim 20. Accordingly, the Section 103 rejections of dependent claims 10, 11, 17 and 18 should be withdrawn for at least the foregoing reasons, and for the additional features of these dependent claims.

B. Response to the Section 103(a) Rejection of Claims 3, 6, 12, 13 and 15 (Koga and Kanemitsu)

Claims 3, 6, 12, 13 and 15 were rejected under Section 103(a) over the combination of Koga and Kanemitsu. Claim 3 has been amended to depend from base claim 2, claim 6 depends from base claim 5, claims 12 and 13 have been amended to depend from base claim 9, and claim 15 has been amended to depend from base claim 20. As discussed above, Koga and Kanemitsu fail to disclose or suggest all the features of claims 2, 9 and 20. Accordingly, claims 3, 6, 12, 13 and 15 are allowable over the combination of Koga, Kanemitsu, and for at least the reason that these references, either alone or in combination, fail to disclose or suggest the features of base claims 2, 5, 9 and 20, and the additional features of corresponding dependent claims 3, 6, 12, 13 and 15. Therefore, the Section 103 rejections of dependent claims 3, 6, 12, 13 and 15 should be withdrawn.

C. Response to the Section 103(a) Rejection of Claims 4, 7 and 16 (Koga, Kanemitsu, and Bearss)

Claims 4, 7 and 16 were rejected under Section 103(a) as unpatentable over Koga in view of Kanemitsu and Bearss. Claim 4 depends from base claim 2, claim 7 depends from base claim 5, and claim 16 depends from base claim 20. As discussed above, Koga and Kanemitsu fail to disclose or suggest all the features of claims 2, 5 and 20. Bearss is relied on in the Office Action for describing a dithering process that comprises a sampling mode dithering. (Office Action, pp. 30 and 31.) Even assuming for the sake of argument that this is correct (and the applicants expressly do not), Bearss fails to cure the above-noted deficiencies of Koga and Kanemitsu to support Section 103 rejections of base claims 2, 5 and 20. Accordingly, claims 4, 7 and 16 are allowable over the combination of Koga, Kanemitsu, and Bearss for at least the reason that these references, either alone or in combination, fail to disclose or suggest the features of claims 2, 5 and 20, and the additional features of corresponding dependent claims 4, 7 and 16. Therefore, the Section 103 rejections of dependent claims 4, 7 and 16 should be withdrawn.

D. New Claims 21-24

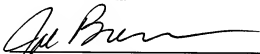
New claims 21-24 have been added to the present application. The subject matter of these claims is supported by the figures and text of the original application. Therefore, these claims do not add any new matter to the application and are fully supported under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph.

Conclusion

In view of the foregoing, the pending claims comply with the requirements of 35 U.S.C. § 112 and are patentable over the applied art. The applicants accordingly request reconsideration of the application and a mailing of a Notice of Allowance. If the Examiner has any questions or believes a telephone conference would expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is encouraged to contact Aaron J. Poledna at (206) 359-3982.

Respectfully submitted,
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